News



Conservative activist Charlie Kirk appears at a Utah Valley University speaking event in Orem, Utah, Sept. 10, 2025. Kirk was shot during the event, and President Donald Trump later said on social media that Kirk had been killed. (OSV News/Trent Nelson, The Salt Lake Tribune via Reuters)

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Conservative activist Charlie Kirk, a close ally of President Donald Trump, was killed after being shot Sept. 10 during an event at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah, the president announced on social media.

Public officials and other commentators called for prayer after he was shot in the neck, reportedly by a sniper. Kirk was 31 and a married father with two young children.

"The Great, and even Legendary, Charlie Kirk, is dead," Trump said.

"No one understood or had the Heart of the Youth in the United States of America better than Charlie," the president said in a statement on social media. "He was loved and admired by ALL, especially me, and now, he is no longer with us. Melania and my Sympathies go out to his beautiful wife Erika, and family. Charlie, we love you!"

Kirk, founder of the Republican-aligned Turning Point USA, was being hosted by that organization's chapter at the university for his "American Comeback Tour." Kirk was discussing mass shootings in the U.S. with an individual attendee when a single shot rang out, striking Kirk and scattering the crowd, according to multiple reports.

Born in Arlington Heights, Illinois, near Chicago, Kirk co-founded Turning Point USA 13 years ago when he was just 18 years old. His co-founder, a Tea Party conservative, William Montgomery, died in 2020.



People run after a shot was fired at U.S. conservative activist Charlie Kirk during a Utah Valley University speaking event in Orem, Utah, Sept. 10, 2025. (OSV News/Trent Nelson, The Salt Lake Tribune via Reuters)

Reaction on social media poured in from all sides of the political and ecclesial divide and focused on two major themes: prayers for Kirk, and condemnation of political violence.

Vice President JD Vance and Gov. Gavin Newsom, D-Calif., both Catholics, were among the first officials across the aisle who offered their reactions on social media, calling for prayer and condemning political violence, respectively.

"Dear God, protect Charlie in his darkest hour," Vance wrote prior to confirmation of Kirk's death by the president. "Say a prayer for Charlie Kirk, a genuinely good guy and a young father."

Newsom called the shooting "disgusting, vile, and reprehensible."

"In the United States of America, we must reject political violence in EVERY form," Newsom wrote.

Newsom and Kirk previously joined each other's podcasts to debate their political differences.

Former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who survived after she was shot and gravely injured in 2011, wrote on X, "I'm horrified to hear that Charlie Kirk was shot at an event in Utah."

"Democratic societies will always have political disagreements, but we must never allow America to become a country that confronts those disagreements with violence," she said.

Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America and Students for Life Action and a Catholic, said in a statement she was speaking at her own campus tour at the University of Montana at the time of the incident and stopped it to pray in response to hearing the news.

"As I also stood on a college campus, I was horrified to learn that my friend Charlie Kirk had been shot," Hawkins said. "Our nation is in crisis when speaking up for preborn children and for love of country leads to violence, and that’s clearly on the rise."

Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, was also among those who called for prayer.

The U.S. House of Representatives observed a moment of silence in response.

"Beyond politics Charlie Kirk was someone’s father, husband and son. Remember that first, before engaging in whataboutism. His family will never be the same. Political violence has to stop by all sides," wrote Democratic Sen. Ruben Gallego of Arizona, also a Catholic.

"Horrified by news that Charlie Kirk has been shot," wrote Democratic New York Gov. Kathy Hochul shortly after the shooting. "Political violence has no place in this country."

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Democrat of California, whose husband was the victim of a politically motivated home break-in and attack, denounced the shooting.

"The horrific shooting today at Utah Valley University is reprehensible. Political violence has absolutely no place in our nation," Pelosi said. "All Americans should pray for Charlie Kirk's recovery and hold the entire UVU community in our hearts as they endure the trauma of this gun violence," she said, before Trump confirmed Kirk's death.

Former Vice President Kamala Harris wrote on X prior to news of Kirk's death that she was disturbed by the shooting in Utah. "Doug and I send our prayers to Charlie Kirk and his family. Let me be clear: Political violence has no place in America. I condemn this act, and we all must work together to ensure this does not lead to more violence."

Harris' Secret Service protection was revoked in August by Trump — security that otherwise would have ended next summer, senior Trump administration officials told reporters last month.

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Kirk's shooting comes three months after Democratic State Rep. Melissa Hortman of Minnesota and her husband Mark were shot and killed in an apparent politically motivated attack, two weeks after a shooting at a Catholic school in Minneapolis, and on the same day as a shooting at a Denver high school.

Some on social media noted a Kirk appearance in 2023 in which he said that gun deaths were "unfortunately" worth it for the right to bear arms.

"I think it's worth to have a cost of, unfortunately, some gun deaths every single year so that we can have the Second Amendment to protect our other God-given rights. That is a prudent deal. It is rational. Nobody talks like this. They live in a complete alternate universe," said Kirk, speaking at a Turning Point USA Faith event.

In 2022, Kirk spoke at breakfast for politically conservative pastors during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Anaheim, California. There he warned that liberal political causes like Black Lives Matter were invading churches. "Our beautiful faith is under attack from within," he said.

Kirk, who grew up Presbyterian, urged Baptist leaders in the room to set aside their theological differences to focus on saving the country from liberals.

Justin Hickens, a witness to the shooting, said to NBC News that the first interaction at the event was a "religious-related exchange." Then, Hickens said, someone asked Kirk a question about mass shootings. Hickens said he heard a shot about 60-90 seconds later and saw Kirk "go limp."

The New York State Catholic Conference wrote in a statement: "Once again, America has seen an act of apparent political violence on our shores. Violence must be condemned wherever and whenever it occurs. We are horrified by the murder of Charlie Kirk. We pray for his soul and for his family's comfort and solace."

Kirk's wife, Ericka Lane Frantzve, posted a Bible verse online just ahead of the Utah Valley engagement, according to Fox News. She quoted from Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

This is a developing news story. Bob Smietana at Religion News Service and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

This story appears in the **Charlie Kirk murder news and commentary** feature series. View the full series.